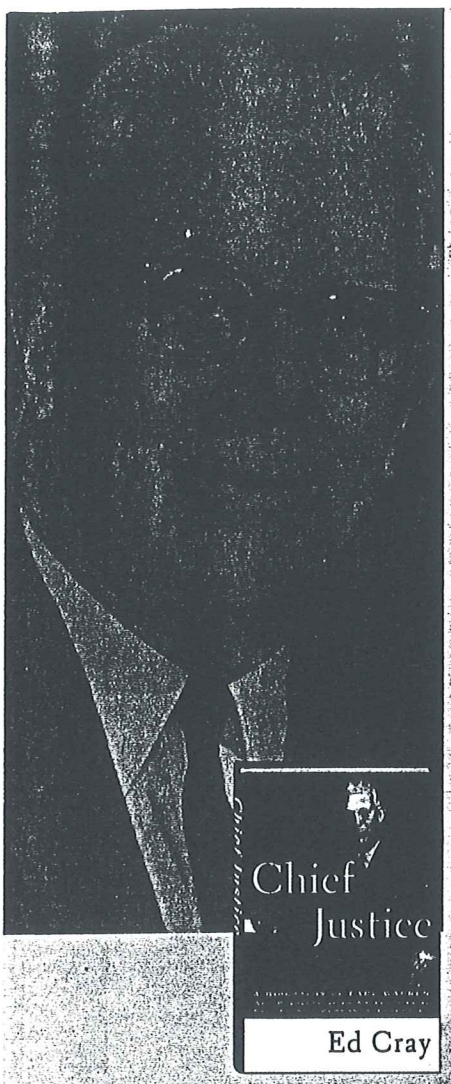


BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB™

A monumental biography of a justice for all seasons

# Chief Justice

## A BIOGRAPHY OF EARL WARREN

*by Ed Cray*

*Because Warren had not yet arrived at the office, secretary Maryalice Lemmon routed the call to the [governor's] mansion, where Nina Warren answered the telephone.*

*"The White House is calling, Mrs. Warren."*

*"He couldn't possibly come to the phone, Maryalice. He's in the shower."*

*"Well, what do you want me to tell the president?"*

*Ever after, Lemmon would hold the mental image of Earl Warren, dripping from his shower, accepting the president's offer to be the chief justice of the United States.*

In a public career that spanned five decades, Earl Warren was a district attorney, a state attorney general, and thrice elected governor of California before he was appointed to head the Supreme Court in 1953. Now, finally, there is a book that illuminates the man and the career as never before.

To say Chief Justice Earl Warren was "controversial" is an understatement. To say that the Warren Court "influenced" the history of American jurisprudence is to give only an approximation of the scope of Warren's impact on our lives. From school segregation to prayer in the public realm, from the exclusionary rule to the Miranda case, from libel law to the principle of a free press, Warren and his fellow justices ruled on virtually every legal aspect of American life during his 16-year term.

When President Kennedy was assassinated, Johnson called upon Earl Warren to chair the commission charged with investigating the murder. Warren demurred, but when LBJ pressed, he complied. In the biography, we experience the day-to-day workings of the commission as Warren performed two full-time jobs (at the age of 73) in order to report to the American people the hows and whys of the tragedy at Dallas. We were fascinated to learn about the obscure youth from Bakersfield who more or less stumbled into the national stage.

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